

Washington, DC -- Congressman Vern Buchanan (R-FL 13) helped defeat efforts to expand drilling off the Florida coast. The House last night rejected two amendments to the fiscal year 2008 Interior and the Environment Appropriations Act to remove a long-standing, bipartisan ban on expanded drilling off the Florida coast.

“For decades, Congress and the administration have had the foresight and the wisdom to protect Florida’s coasts, beaches, and marine life from the threats of oil and gas development,” said Buchanan. “We should not end decades of sound policy in a misguided attempt to provide a short-term solution to high energy prices. We are not going to drill our way to energy independence. We need a balanced energy policy that promotes conservation, renewables, and alternative energy sources.”

One amendment, introduced by U.S. Rep. John Peterson (R-PA 5), would lift congressional and presidential moratoriums on expanded drilling in the outer continental shelf to allow drilling for natural gas within 25 miles of Florida’s west coast. That amendment failed by a vote of 196 to 233. Another amendment, offered by U.S. Rep. Mike Conaway (R-TX 11), would have prohibited federal funds from being used to enforce the moratoriums. That amendment also failed by a vote of 167 to 264.

“Drilling operations produce huge amounts of waste and significant levels of pollution. Be it for gas, oil, or both -- expanded drilling off the Florida coast jeopardizes our natural resources, which are vital to our economy and our quality of life. We need to protect our coastline and our economy,” concluded Buchanan.